United Nations A/65/PV.80

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

80th plenary meeting
Monday, 21 March 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 30 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/65/701)

Agenda item 109 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/65/353)

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): We face multiple challenges in post-conflict situations, from supporting political processes and reconciliation to creating safety and security, and from enshrining the rule of law to providing basic services. In that regard, the United Nations, particularly through the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), has a significant role to play.

Since its establishment, the Commission has consolidated its core advisory role in effectively addressing the needs of countries emerging from conflict and moving towards sustainable peace. It has demonstrated increasing support by helping to channel resources to critical peacebuilding priorities and by contributing to efforts to strengthen national capacities. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Commission to mobilize sustained international attention. We also welcome the recent establishment of the Guinea country configuration, which we believe will help to redouble peacebuilding endeavours in that country.

With regard to the review of the Commission, let me underline a few points that we deem important to ensuring success in our efforts to counter the challenges in post-conflict countries, particularly those on the agenda of the PBC. First of all, we should pursue an integrated and comprehensive approach. That approach should be based on coherence among political, security, development, human rights, humanitarian and rule of law objectives. It also requires the harmonization of policies and procedures among the various entities of the United Nations.

We believe that priority should be given to building national institutions and strengthening national ownership of peacebuilding processes. The focus should be on the identification and reinforcement of existing local capacities. Therefore, close cooperation with national authorities and international actors is necessary. In that regard, we believe that the review of the deployment of civilian capacity see (A/65/747) is highly important. We should also bear in mind that every country is unique. Therefore, the prioritization of peacebuilding and capacity-building activities must be country-specific. That requires sufficiently flexible strategic planning for all peacebuilding activities.

Let me also emphasize the importance of the role of women, not only in peacebuilding but also in the prevention and resolution of conflict. There is a need to mainstream women's participation into all stages of our

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

11-27319 (E)

Please recycle

efforts. We welcome the increasing awareness within the United Nations system and among Member States of the need to remove the constraints on their full participation. We wish to see the further empowerment of women in peacebuilding processes.

The Commission can also realize its full potential and deliver on its promises as an indispensable actor by duly taking into consideration the priorities that I have just mentioned. The Commission's contributions can drastically improve peacebuilding outcomes and the impact of international efforts.

The effectiveness of the PBC will depend on the level of commitment of Member States. Turkey is keen to continue its support for United Nations peacebuilding efforts in every possible way, including through enhanced engagement with the Commission. We are also ready to share our experience gained through our active involvement in, and support for the recovery efforts of, post-conflict countries in different parts of the world.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): Like others, the United States would like to thank Ambassador Wittig, Ambassador Gasana, the Chairs of the six country-specific configurations, the three Ambassadors who led the 2010 review (see A/64/868), the Peacebuilding support Office and our many in-country partners for their leadership and dedication. They all deserve credit for the progress that is being made.

The United States continues to strongly support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) because promoting sustainable peace is at the heart of the work of the United Nations. We welcome the growing strength of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). They draw our attention to countries emerging from conflict, advise us on and propose strategies to build sustainable peace, and provide the necessary resources to prevent a relapse into violence.

We applaud efforts to address many of the shortcomings highlighted in last year's annual review, as well as the progress made this year, particularly in the countries on its agenda. We commend the Commission's efforts to align its strategic frameworks with national strategies and to address the significant administrative burden and transaction costs for national stakeholders and operational actors. We saw that in a number of configuration countries, and its further refinement now in Liberia. We urge the Commission to begin its work in Guinea with similar efficiency and innovation.

We appreciate the efforts of the working group on lessons learned, and urge it to continue to foster meaningful dialogue and to improve on its current efforts by linking its discussions and findings more directly to PBC and PBF programmes in the field. The Peacebuilding Fund's efforts to act as a rapid and relevant instrument for early peacebuilding efforts are to be praised. We urge the Fund to further refine its focus in configuration countries and to ensure that national leaders and stakeholders are invested in the success of its programmes.

In spite of considerable progress, the Commission still faces significant challenges. The Commission must work harder to link ambitions in New York with programmes and leadership in the field. It must also improve coordination with international institutions on needs assessments and programming, refine national ownership and capacity development, design impact measurements, strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions and produce coherent visions and efforts across all players in countries with a United Nations peacebuilding presence.

As the Commission and the Fund continue to grow and more countries are added to the agenda, it is even more critical that United Nations peacebuilding capacities improve. The time is now, as more countries are turning to the United Nations for resources and assistance in advancing peace and security.

Mrs. Pinto Lopes D'Alva (Guinea-Bissau): As this is the first time that I address the General Assembly under your leadership, Mr. President, I would like to commend you for your dedication to the work of the General Assembly during the sixth-fifth session, as well as to thank you for giving me the floor on this important issue. On behalf of my Government, allow me also to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, His Excellency Ambassador Gasana, on his assumption of the Chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a body of extreme importance to Guinea-Bissau. Allow me to reiterate the optimism of my country for his leadership and to congratulate him and his office team for the presentation of a very positive report (A/65/701).

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank his predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Wittig, Permanent Representative of Germany, far his skilful work during his mandate and for his dedication to the cause of peace in Guinea-Bissau. Equally, permit me to express my delegation's warm gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Her Excellency Ambassador Maria Luiza Viotti, Chairperson of the PBC's Guinea-Bissau configuration, her team and all members of the configuration for the excellent work that they have been doing for peace and development in Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to express here my country's deep appreciation for the creation of this important body, which, in coordination with the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, has been very closely monitoring the process of peacebuilding in our country. Guinea-Bissau, a country emerging from conflict and with fragile economic structures and enormous challenges, would not have been able to achieve significant steps on its own without the constant support of the PBC, which has been playing an important role on our continent, in particular in our subregion.

Despite the difficulties that our country has endured during the past decade, it should be pointed out that enormous progress has been registered lately in the area of socio-economic development, with reforms and great sacrifices by the Government with a view to guaranteeing peace and sustainable development. Guinea-Bissau has made efforts to rigorously manage its public finances, which has resulted in positive economic trends and, consequently, reaching the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative last December, through which our external debt was considerably reduced. Despite all our efforts for such an achievement, we must also thank the PBC in general, and the PBC's Guinea-Bissau configuration in particular, as well as all countries that contributed to the adoption of that decision through their support to international financial institutions in Washington, D.C.

The Government of Guinea-Bissau has made efforts in the area of peacebuilding by implementing many projects to ensure peace and the well-being of our population. As we all know, women are important players in the peacebuilding of any society, which is why in Guinea-Bissau women are involved in the decision-making process and peacebuilding efforts. The empowerment of women is a key sector in which the Government is investing in projects and programmes, including in the areas of basic health care and education, along with vocational training, to provide women with more income-generating activities. As a country where the majority of the population comprises young people, the Guinea-Bissau Government, in cooperation with its international partners and the United Nations, has created training centres for technical and professional skills to ensure better human resource training. More than 100 young people have benefited from professional skills in many technical areas, a step that is important to us in reducing social tensions among that section of the population.

At the same time, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the Government implemented a project denominated "Emprego Jovem", which helped in the creation of self-managed employment for trained youths, allowing them to take advantage of bank credits for creating their own businesses, which in turn helped to reduce the unemployment rate in the country.

The report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/65/353) is welcomed and appreciated by my delegation because of its importance to the work of the PBC, which, in coordination with the Peacebuilding Support Office, will better be able to help to implement peacebuilding projects in the countries under consideration. The recent initiative of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to allocate $16.8 million to Guinea-Bissau priority areas is very commendable, and we are very grateful for it. Guinea-Bissau is determined to fulfil the requirements of the international community, whose support and allocation of funds of this type are of extreme importance to the implementation of its projects and reforms in all their aspects. We continue to count upon the assistance of all our international partners in this process.

Before concluding, I would like once again to commend the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, its Support Office team, the PBF, the PBC Guinea-Bissau country configuration, the entire United Nations team and the Member States that have been very engaged in the peacebuilding efforts in our country.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important joint debate on the activities

of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). I would also like to convey my delegation's gratitude for the quality and in-depth nature of the reports presented by the Chair of the fourth session of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Germany, Mr. Peter Wittig (A/65/353), and by the Secretary-General (A/65/701).

We welcome with keen interest the statements made by Mr. Eugène-Richard Gasana, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, whose dynamic leadership I salute, and by the Chairs of the country configurations, which have served to fuel our reflections and contributed to fruitful deliberations within the Assembly. We also thank the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of South Africa, Ireland and Mexico, for their relevant recommendations following their examination of the United Nations peacebuilding apparatus. My delegation fully supports the statement made by Mr. Abdel Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and now wishes to make the following comments in its national capacity.

The Republic of Guinea recognizes the critical role that the Peacebuilding Commission plays as the intergovernmental organ responsible for supporting the development and implementation of peacebuilding strategies and for ensuring closer coordination among countries emerging from conflict or an acute socio-political crisis. In this context, I wish to convey to the members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission and to the members of the General Assembly the deep gratitude of the Government and people of Guinea for their inclusion of the Republic of Guinea on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission on 23 February, in response to an urgent national demand, and their decision to establish a PBC country configuration for the Republic of Guinea.

My country welcomes the outstanding election of Luxembourg to chair the sixth and latest session of the Commission and is honoured by the manner in which our colleague, Ms. Sylvie Lucas, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations, has accepted this daunting challenge. We pay particular tribute to the Chairs of the fourth and fifth sessions of the Commission, the Permanent Representatives of Germany and Rwanda to the United Nations, and through them to their respective bureaux for their laudable efforts to bring to a successful conclusion the in-depth consultations on PBC support for Guinea.

In making their unprecedented request to the PBC, my country's new authorities, elected in elections that were the freest, most democratic and transparent ever held in Guinea, demonstrated their political resolve to lay the basis for lasting peace, stability and national harmony in the country and the subregion. Indeed, as Guinea enters this new era of democracy under the presidency of Mr. Alpha Condé, the prospects for peace, security, development and respect for human rights depend on the political commitment and the capacity of the new Government to shoulder its responsibilities, as well as on the support to be given by the African and international communities to help the country on the difficult road to national recovery and reconciliation.

The challenges before us are many and complex, as the crises that have affected Guinea have been long-standing, deep and aggravated by poor governance, political and institutional instability, impunity, massive and repeated human rights violations, widespread practice of corruption and, in the subregional context, seriously affected by civil wars and the spread of transnational organized crime, in particular drug trafficking.

In order to overcome the challenges posed to the fragile peace, national unity and recovery following the presidential elections, the Guinean Government has sought to focus its request for support, advice and sustenance on the following priority areas: first, youth employment and the employment women; secondly, the promotion of reconciliation and national unity; thirdly, reform of the defence, security and other sectors responsible for the establishment of the rule of law and good governance; and fourthly, completing the democratic transition through the preparation and organization of legislative elections leading to the establishment of a National Assembly, with the input of political stakeholders in transparency and national harmony.

I take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the people and Government of Guinea to the Secretary-General and to the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, who have made the Peacebuilding Fund a fast-acting, relevant and catalytic instrument to prevent violent conflict, facilitate

political dialogue and restore constitutional order in Guinea.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Guinean Government, I wish to convey our deepest gratitude to the African and international communities and to Guinea's partners, who have tirelessly endeavoured to support the peaceful and democratic transition to which the people of Guinea aspire with all their hearts. I wish to assure you, Mr. President, that the Government of Guinea shall spare no effort in working with the Peacebuilding Commission and with all national, regional and international protagonists to pave the way for lasting peace, stability and development in Guinea and in the subregion.

Ms. Tawk (Lebanon): We thank you, Sir, for having organized this meeting. We would also like to thank Ambassador Wittig for his dedicated efforts during his tenure as the Chair of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). We would also like to extend to Ambassador Gasana, current Chair of the Commission, our sincere wishes for success in his endeavours.

We would like to align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Bangladesh on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Tangible results have been achieved through the PBC's engagement in country-specific situations, from the supportive role it played during the elections in Burundi to the economic revitalization it helped foster in Sierra Leone, the PBC proved its added value as the main platform for peacebuilding activities within the United Nations system. However, a number of challenges remain in the countries on its agenda.

The review of the peacebuilding architecture, concluded this year, generated valuable momentum that we can build on to face those challenges in a more comprehensive and determined way. In that regard, we are pleased to note that the report before us (A/65/701) has taken into account the recommendations emanating from the review process. We also note with appreciation the progress made in response to a number of recommendations. However, we need to redouble our efforts to meet the expectations generated by the review and its recommendations.

In our view, there needs to be sustained attention on the progress achieved in the following vital areas. First, peacebuilding engagement must maximize local ownership by involving populations as quickly and as extensively as possible within their own governance architecture. Such engagement should be context-sensitive and orient different actors and partners towards re-establishing national capacities for governance and service delivery according to the specific needs of the country concerned.

Secondly, it is essential to enhance cooperation between the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund in a way that would ensure supply-driven funding that would support broader peacebuilding objectives. Mutual commitments between the Government and the international community need to be coupled with mutual accountability.

Thirdly, it is essential that all members of the Organizational Committee use their political weight to align actors around common peacebuilding objectives, with the support of the respective country-specific configuration.

We look forward to the forthcoming progress report and to the practical approach that will be developed by the PBC to track the progress made in the implementation of the review's recommendations, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report.

We also concur with the representative of Bangladesh when he underlined that the work and activities of the Commission need to acquire a cumulative nature, which would enable it to fulfil its responsibilities.

Post-conflict peacebuilding will undoubtedly determine the shape and direction peace and stability will take in a country. It is thus our responsibility to provide the necessary means for such an undertaking to succeed.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General and the Chair and members of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for the comprehensive report on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) (A/65/353) and the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/65/701) pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 63/282 and 60/180, respectively. Sierra Leone warmly welcomes the reports, which accurately reflect the programmes and activities of the PBC in Sierra Leone and the work of the Commission during the period under review.

Let me also thank the outgoing Chair of the PBC for his statement, for having steered the work of the

Commission so well and for his support to the work of the Chair and members of the Sierra Leone configuration. In a similar vein, I would like to welcome the new Chair of the PBC and to assure him of Sierra Leone's support and our readiness to share our experiences and lessons learned with a view to adding value to the work of the Commission.

The Commission has made commendable progress in addressing the recommendations that emerged from the 2010 review. In particular, we are supportive of the creation of the PBC country-specific configuration for Liberia and look forward to Guinea being placed on the agenda of the Commission. The inclusion of these two sisterly countries on the PBC agenda will further strengthen and consolidate peace and security in the Mano River basin.

We welcome the Commission's plans to take forward the recommendations from the review with regard to facilitating annual reporting to the General Assembly and the Security Council. This will not only stimulate the interest of the two organs in the Commission's work but also provide the basis for discussion of the impact of peacebuilding in countries where the Commission is already engaged and, at the same time, enhance the Commission's impact on national capacity development, resource mobilization and efforts to align key actors behind common peacebuilding objectives.

The relevance of partnership for peacebuilding and its value for addressing challenges mean that we should devote great attention to partnership from the very beginning of peacekeeping missions, giving important focus to an integrated approach in both the peacekeeping and peacebuilding phases. In particular, building and strengthening partnerships with relevant actors, such as international financial institutions, civil society, academia and regional organizations, will undoubtedly add value, deepen knowledge about the Commission's role and activities and make its impact more visible.

The Commission's efforts to engage international financial institutions and regional institutions, especially the World Bank and the African Union, are therefore highly commendable. We also commend the Commission's efforts to prioritize the need to strengthen interaction with the principal organs of the United Nations, which will further enhance its advisory role and increase interest in its work and activities across the membership of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

We appreciate the efforts of the Government of Austria and other partners in organizing the regional seminar on the theme "Strategies and lessons learned on sustainable reintegration and job creation: what works in West Attica", which was held in Freetown on 2 and 3 December 2010. We also appreciate the background paper for the seminar prepared by some of Sierra Leone's international partners — the United Nations, the World Bank, German Development Cooperation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the European Union. This was quite timely, and the very enriching discussions should be built upon and used as a reference point for future peacebuilding discussions focusing on the problem of youth unemployment.

The main lesson for Sierra Leone when it comes to the international community partnering with the Government and people of Sierra Leone in reconstructing the State is the need to recognize and support domestically driven democratic processes and development priorities. At the heart of this is the issue of making Government accountable, transparent and participatory.

Peacebuilding processes are context- and country-specific. While lessons learned from one context should inform others, there might be more value from a conceptual rather than a practical point of view. On priority setting, there is a lot of experience and guidance to be considered for integrated peacebuilding strategies. Experiences also indicate that peacebuilding interventions need time for concepts to take hold and activities to be nationally led and owned.

While the peacebuilding architecture has proven its worth, there is a growing need to strengthen its engagement in order to sustain peace beyond the life of peacekeeping missions to prevent countries from relapsing into conflict.

Let me conclude by expressing our satisfaction with the work of the Chair of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration, Ambassador John McNeil, and members of the configuration. We appreciate their good efforts in peacebuilding and encourage them to keep up the momentum in resource mobilization to bridge the funding gap for the implementation of the

United Nations Joint Vision and the Government's Agenda for Change.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus completed the current stage of its consideration of agenda items 30 and 109.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.